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MEMORANDA
OF 1846. AND 1847.

REV^D F. W. FOWLE.

48.923.



MEMORANDA

OF

1846 AND 1847;

BEING

BRIEF ALLUSIONS TO SOME OF
THE MEMORABLE EVENTS

OF THOSE EVENTFUL YEARS,

AS NOTED DOWN AT THE TIME.

BY

THE REV. FULWAR WILLIAM FOWLE, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY CATHEDRAL,
RECTOR OF ALLINGTON,
AND PERPETUAL CURATE OF AMESBURY.

“When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants
of the world will learn righteousness.”—ISAIAH, xxvi. 9.



LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1848.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODE and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

TO
MY SONS,
FREDERICK AND EDMUND FOWLE,

WHO ARE MAKING, I HOPE,
THE BEST USE OF THEIR PRECIOUS TIME,
AT MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE,

DILIGENT IN THEIR STUDIES,

RESPECTFUL AND OBEDIENT TO MASTERS AND
SUPERIORS,

FRIENDLY TOWARDS ALL,

EVER FIRM TO REFUSE THE EVIL AND
CHOOSE THE GOOD.

1.

My dear Boys,

I owe you some letters, and am going to pay you off in rather an unusual way, by a little book ; and on rather a grave subject for young people—some of the dealings of God with a nation. But I wish you to be early impressed with a sense of his immediate providence over both kingdoms and individuals, that you should connect in your minds national and individual obedience or disobedience to his commands, with national or individual retribution.

All the events which happen in this state of our being are so many calls to direct our thoughts to God, so many alternate subjects of prayer or praise, so many continually recurring occasions for the exercise of Christian duties.

About five years ago one of you was very ill, almost unto death. Was not this a subject of prayer ? You are now alive and in health. Is not this a subject of praise ? The one, too, was a warning given, and the other a mercy shown. And what ought to follow upon this ? a grateful living unto God, a sympathy with the sufferings of others, and a desire to show mercy as we have received mercy.

And the course of God's dispensations is the same, "whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only." And this has been repeatedly manifested to us by the remarkable displays of his chastisements and his mercies to our country, during the last two eventful years of 1846 and 1847 — not to go back beyond your own memory. There was imminent danger to our possessions in India, to our brave troops there, to our countrymen, to our friends. What a subject of prayer ! There was deliverance from this danger and these fears. What a subject of praise ! There was dearth and scarcity at home ; a chastisement upon sin, and a warning to repent. There was a dreadful calamity to the capital of one of our colonies in America, two thousand persons suddenly cast out homeless, in the midst of winter without the very necessaries of life ; a trial of our Christian love. Then came increased warnings and chastisements, thousands of our countrymen dying of hunger, and famine apprehended among ourselves. At last we were brought to national fasting and humiliation, and earnest prayers that our evils might be averted. And, finally, our prayers were heard, and there followed an abundant harvest, and a great deliverance.

These events, briefly touched upon, are the particular subjects of the following pages.

But whilst you read them apply them individually. Call to mind God's dealings with yourselves, his gifts, his mercies, his warnings, his chastenings, his deliverances ; and be assured that as you sow, you shall reap, "perhaps not to-day, nor to-morrow ; but certainly, though not speedily." You cannot sow in idleness or indolence, and reap the fruits of wisdom and knowledge. You cannot sow in carelessness and unconcern about religion and religious duties, and reap the consolations of religion on a dying bed. You cannot sow the tares of the wicked one, and reap the harvest of the good seed of the Word of God. And learn at once to regard an abuse of any of the talents which God has lent to you in its true light, viz., as unfaithfulness in your stewardship, for which you will have to render a strict account to him. Do not waste time and opportunities, and regard it as no crime : what crime can well be deeper or more deliberate ?

"Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." By which I understand, that to avoid gross immoralities will little avail us, if we do not add to this negative goodness the active discharge of all the relative duties of life, expressed here by "visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction ;" administering to their wants,

soothing them in their sorrows, considerate to their feelings. And if we are thus to act by those not immediately connected with us, how much more ought we to care for those of our own household ! And to fulfil these bounden duties of a Christian requires the continual practice of self-denial ; self-denial in our habits of expense, and self-denial in the gratification of our desires and inclinations ; a continual reference of our conduct, as it will affect not only our own wishes or interests, but the comfort and happiness of those around us. Cases will be for ever occurring throughout life, demanding the sacrifice of personal indulgence to the discharge of our duties to God and to man. Begin the practice of this early in life. Deny yourselves in little things now, and it will be easy and natural to you (or rather, it will be the effects of grace) to deny yourselves in greater things hereafter. Never forget what you owe to your parents, and do not bring needless cares and anxieties on their declining years, by giving them reason to fear that they have watched and laboured for you in vain.

And take this as a certain invariable rule, that no offence ever goes without its due recompense of reward, repaid to it sooner or later, in one way or another. The reasoning of Bishop Sherlock on this great truth is simple and unanswerable.

“The punishment in all cases must exceed the

advantage the offender will reap by transgressing the law ; or else, as much as the gain to be reaped by breaking the law exceeds the punishment annexed to the breach, so much encouragement there will be for men to offend. Therefore we may be sure that God, who is the wisest of law-givers, has taken such care to guard his laws and statutes, that there shall be no encouragement for offenders. Upon which account we may assure ourselves that, let the pleasures and advantages of sin and irreligion be ever so numerous and great, the punishment shall still be greater : so that men shall say, when they are to pay the price of their sins, they have sinned exceeding *foolishly*."

I cannot conclude with any thing more worthy to be laid to heart.

I pray God to keep and to guide you.

Your affectionate Father,

FULWAR WILLIAM FOWLE.

Amesbury, April 28th, 1848.

advantage the offender will reap by transgressing the law ; or else, as much as the gain to be reaped by breaking the law exceeds the punishment annexed to the breach, so much encouragement there will be for men to offend. Therefore we may be sure that God, who is the wisest of law-givers, has taken such care to guard his laws and statutes, that there shall be no encouragement for offenders. Upon which account we may assure ourselves, that, let the pleasures and advantages of his will and irreligion be ever so numerous and great, the punishment shall still be greater, so that men, I say, when they are to pay the price of their sin, they have sinned exceeding foolishly.

I cannot conclude with any thing more proper to be laid to heart.

I pray God to keep all us in his grace.

Your affectionate son,

James O. Smith.

Amesbury, April 20th, 1801.

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No. I.

THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY.

Sunday, April 26. 1846.

*From the Form of Thanksgiving for Victory on the Banks of
the Sutlege ; on Thursday the 12th of April, 1846.*

“ O Lord God of Hosts, in whose hand is power and might irresistible, we, thine unworthy servants, most humbly acknowledge thy goodness in the victories lately vouchsafed to the armies of our Sovereign over a host of barbarous invaders, who sought to spread desolation over fruitful and populous provinces enjoying the blessings of peace under the protection of the British crown. From thee alone cometh the victory and the spirit of moderation and mercy in the day of success. Continue, we beseech thee, to go forth with our armies, whensoever they are called into battle in a righteous cause ; and dispose the hearts of their leaders to exact nothing more from the vanquished than is necessary for the maintenance of peace, and security against violence and rapine.

“ Above all, give thy grace to those who preside in the councils of our Sovereign, and administer the concerns of her widely-extended dominions, that they may apply all their endeavours to the purposes designed by thy good Providence in committing such power to their hands, the temporal and spiritual benefit of the nations entrusted to their care.

“ And whilst thou preservest our distant possessions from the horrors of war, give us peace and plenty at home, that the earth may yield her increase, and that we, thy servants, receiving thy blessings with thankfulness and gladness of heart, may dwell together in unity, and faithfully serve thee, to thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost belong all dominion and power, now and for ever.”

THE year 1845 closed, and the present year 1846 opened upon us under circumstances of the greatest anxiety for the stability of our Eastern Empire. The Sikh nation, conspicuous among the native powers of Hindostan for valour and military skill, invaded the British territories with an overwhelming force. The aggression was most unjust and unprovoked, and accompanied by circumstances of peculiar treachery. However, perfidious and treacherous as they were, they were the bravest and the best disciplined, and in every respect the most powerful and formidable of all the Indian states, with an army twice as numerous as our own.

The anxiety with which each succeeding mail from India was expected, after the first intelligence that war had commenced, spoke the importance of the conflict. The indecisive issue of the first three days of fierce and bloody fight, the unbroken power of the enemy, the number and weight of their guns and our deficiency in both these respects, gave rise to the most alarming anticipations.

Tidings had reached us that the Governor-General of India, and the Commander-in-Chief of the

British army there, had been in the thickest of the fight and the most perilous of the danger; that another battle might be daily expected; and we could not help anxiously thinking how much might be depending, humanly speaking, on the lives of these gallant men. Had the event gone against us, there would have been a merciless enemy spreading terror and devastation over British India, every tributary state rising up to join them, and the richest and most important cities exposed to all the sufferings of a siege and the horrors of rapine and plunder. History is full of revolutions of the kind, and we lost our dominions in America in a manner quite as unexpected. The greatest alarm prevailed in Calcutta, and throughout British India generally.

Nor was this the worst to be apprehended. The world was looking on with varied and deep, and very unfriendly interest. The defeat of an army of England — an event almost unrecorded in the annals of the present century — would have passed like an electric shock through all the kingdoms of Europe, and from the eastern to the western hemisphere. Every nation envious of our glory, jealous of our power, coveting our possessions, or stung by past recollections, would have made common cause against us, and we should have stood almost singly against the world. At home, the funds would have

been depressed, commerce have been interrupted, public credit impaired, public confidence at an end, faction would have had food to fatten on, and every rebel spirit would have revelled in the sorrows of his country.

Under these gloomy apprehensions the year of 1845 closed in upon us. Her last sun went down amid clouds of thick darkness.

But from such evils and miseries, in the detail of their sufferings not to be named or calculated upon, all dependent, as man speaks, upon the chance of war, and that chance seeming to be against us, the Lord in his mercy delivered us. The gathering clouds which obscured the rising sun of 1846 soon broke away, and a bright day shone forth upon us. News arrived that the Sikh forces had been entirely defeated, and that, after three days and nights of terrible carnage, the British army remained masters of the field of battle. Never did officers and soldiers, whether European or native, behave with greater gallantry, more determined resolution, or cooler courage, than in these desperate encounters did the British troops. This poor tribute is surely due to the memory of the departed brave, and to the heroism of those valiant survivors, who "jeopardied their lives unto the death in the high places of the field." But it was the Lord who endowed them with these virtues, and then crowned them

with success. And, although at the head of the British government in India was one of the wisest of Britain's sons, yet was it the Lord who gave direction to his counsels, and spread his shield over him in the battle, and awarded victory to his arms. Such was the pious acknowledgment of the Governor-General himself. And whose heart is so cold and so callous, whose better feelings so dead within him, that he can read without the glow of a holy ardour the conclusion of this great and good man's public address, issued on Christmas-day, three days after the most bloody of the engagements? "The Governor-General invites every British subject at this station to return thanks to Almighty God this day, at eleven o'clock, for the mercies he has so recently vouchsafed us, by assembling at the Governor-General's tent, where prayers and thanksgivings will be read by the Governor-General's chaplain?" And there we are told that many accordingly did meet; "the one scarcely knowing his fellow, smoke, dust, and hunger having so changed their faces, and there, on bended knees, and with upraised hands, they poured out their heartfelt praise and thanks to the only Lord of victory." "O Lord God, thou strength of my health: thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."

In the same spirit of pious gratitude have we just been invited by the government of our country

to unite our praises and thanksgivings with theirs, in the form of prayer, the greater part of which is prefixed to this little chapter, and which is well deserving to be recalled to our memories, and laid up in our hearts.

The ascription of the victory and the glory to God, and the prayer for grace to the conquerors "to exact nothing more from the vanquished, than is necessary for the maintenance of peace, and security against violence and rapine," is well becoming a Christian people. But there is one paragraph in the prayer very happily remarkable, as unreservedly acknowledging the bounden duty of the Sovereign, and of those in authority under her, to provide for the *spiritual* as well as temporal benefit of the millions under British government: "Above all, give thy grace to those who preside in the councils of our Sovereign, and administer the concerns of her widely extended dominions, that they may apply all their endeavours to the purposes designed by thy good Providence in committing such power to their hands, the temporal and spiritual benefit of the nations entrusted to their care." If there be meaning in language, the rulers of the British Empire stand pledged before God to devote their utmost endeavours to the spiritual necessities of those "entrusted to their care," both at home and abroad.

To be sure! such power as Britain possesses, such widely extended dominions as the Providence of God has committed to her charge, can never have been designed by the wise and merciful Governor of the world, merely to bestow temporal wealth and aggrandisement either on the nation generally, or on some few individuals in particular. It was not to such ends that he has given the sea, and to us the command of it, for a readier communication with distant lands: not for this, that he has ordered the trade-winds periodically to change their current, that so we may traverse the ocean more rapidly to and fro: — not for this, that he has given those wonderful faculties of the human mind to man, which enable him to overcome all obstacles that would bar his access to every corner of the globe, and which are now by new devices and discoveries reducing the limits of time and space, in a manner unknown and unthought of in all past generations of the world. No: God has higher and eternal purposes in view in all this, and it must be evident to every reflecting mind that things are hastening to some mighty crisis, and that this crisis has reference to other scenes than those which here engage our affections.

In the mean time *we* are all yet more rapidly passing away, and shall have to answer within some brief space for the part which we have individually

been bearing in God's work ;—that great work for which his eternal Son came into a world of sin and suffering, the making known the Gospel to every creature, the reclaiming the heathen around us, and the proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to every soul, at least within the British Colonies and dependencies abroad. **A**n humble and earnest endeavour thus to promote the honour and glory of God, and the spiritual interests of our brethren in the flesh, will ever be the result of real gratitude for divine favours, and some or other of the various ways by which we may do this are so plain before us, that "the wayfaring man" may find them. Ask, and any one will tell you how you may help to save souls.

It is to some such considerations as these that we are plainly directed by that passage in the Thanksgiving for the day, which pointedly recognizes the obligations incumbent upon us as a Christian people, to employ to the spiritual benefit of the nations entrusted to our care the power which Providence has for that very purpose committed to our hands. Let us not remember the Lord only in our distress, and forget him when he has removed it from us. In many ways we have all individually received mercies : let us all in some way individually show forth our praise by our works. It is a very pleasing and instructive little

circumstance which we have seen mentioned in the public Journals, that a hundred pounds has been sent to the Lord Bishop of Lichfield by an individual in his diocese, to be applied to some pious purpose ; the donor not giving any name, but merely saying, that it was presented as a thank-offering by one who had "been relieved from much anxiety on account of a dear relative engaged in the late campaign in India."

In return, then, for the numberless mercies which the Lord has so abundantly shown to our country, and ourselves, both in past and present times, may we have grace to praise and exalt Him as our fathers' God, and to live to Him as our own : to lay aside our enmities and jealousies, that so we may be preserved, not only from "the horrors of war" abroad, but from the yet more unchristian horrors of faction and discord among brethren at home, and "receiving the blessings of God with faithfulness and gladness of heart, we may dwell together in unity, and faithfully serve him, to his honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

No. II.

DEARTH AND SCARCITY.

Sunday, Oct. 25. 1846.

Form of Prayer to Almighty God for Relief from Dearth and Scarcity, to be read in all Churches and Chapels on Sunday, Oct. 11., and the two following Sundays.

“ O God, at whose bidding the earth, which sustaineth the life of man, hath withholden in parts of these islands the wonted provision of food, and turned abundance into scarcity, withdraw, we beseech thee, the judgment, of which we are justly afraid, that the poor perish not by famine.

“ We acknowledge, O Lord, that by our strifes and divisions, our misuse of thy gifts, and forgetfulness of thy manifold mercies, we have justly deserved punishment ; we have sinned, we have grievously sinned against thee : yet knowing that thou art full of compassion, we beseech thee to pardon the offences of thy people, to relieve the poor and needy in their present necessities, and to give, and preserve to our use the fruits of the earth in their seasons.

“ But whatsoever may be thy pleasure concerning us, give us grace to receive thy dispensations, whether of judgment or mercy, with entire submission to thy will, endeavouring to abate thy displeasure by repentance, and showing forth our sense of thy goodness by faithfully keeping thy commandments.

“ Of ourselves we are unable either to will or to do that which is acceptable in thy sight. We therefore pray thee so to open our hearts to the influences of thy good Spirit, that showing compassion and mercy each man to his neighbour, and bearing the burdens one of another, we may obtain of thy favour the supply of our wants, and, with hearts knit together in brotherly love, may partake of thy bounties in peace and contentment, to the honour and praise of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

FAMINE, pestilence, and the sword, are called in Scripture the "sore judgments" of God. We were speaking of the last of these on a recent occasion, and offering up our thankfulness to him for deliverance from its sorrows and its terrors. With this expression of gratitude was also an acknowledgment, that a Christian government and a Christian people were bound to promote to the utmost the spiritual welfare of the millions under British rule, and to make "the kingdoms of this world" "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Has one effort been since made by the Government of Britain to do this? We know not. How many individuals have been stirred up to greater zeal in this righteous cause? We know not. We prayed that we might "receive God's blessings with thankfulness, dwell together in unity, and faithfully serve him." Who has been truly thankful? Who has laid his unkindly feelings aside? who has given up his lusts and served God truly? We know not. One thing we know is, that God is giving manifest tokens of his anger, that dearth has begun, and that we have been urged by the government of our country to offer up fervent prayers, that we may

not be visited with famine. May the Lord avert it!

English people do not know what famine is. The prophet Jeremiah gives a very striking picture of it. "The cry of Jerusalem is gone up. And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters : they came to the pits, and found no water ; they returned with their vessels empty ; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads. Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain on the earth ; the plowmen were ashamed ; they covered their heads. Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there was no grass. And the wild asses did stand in the high places ; they snuffed up the winds like dragons ; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass." And then follows the cause of all this : "Thus saith the Lord unto this people, thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet ; therefore, the Lord doth not accept them ; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins."

That there is *dearth* among us, and the fear of something worse, is the very occasion of the prayer we have been commanded to offer up, beseeching God, who has "turned abundance into scarcity," to "withdraw the judgment, of which we are justly afraid, that the poor perish not by famine." God has many ways of bringing about the same end.

In Ahab's time, he caused dearth by withholding rain: no one knows how his power has been exerted now. He seems to have made a new thing to punish us for our sins. Our *sins*! What sins? our lusts and sensualities. Who says this? the Apostle: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God." Any other sins? those which spring from the former—divisions, enmities, discord: "Whence come wars and fightings among you?" says another Apostle, "Come they not hence, even of your lusts?" And that what we suffer, and what we further apprehend, is the consequence of such sins, the prayer we have offered up directs us to consider and to confess: "We acknowledge, O Lord, that by our strifes and divisions, our misuse of thy gifts, and forgetfulness of thy manifold mercies, we have justly deserved punishment: we have sinned, we have grievously sinned against thee."

Lusts, strifes, divisions! how early do they begin in life! cradled and nurtured in infancy! fostered by the foolish fondness of parents! the curse of schools, the sorrow of every anxious teacher! the noxious plants which are to be a nation's bane, and to people the kingdom of darkness! How earnestly would I impress upon the young to begin at once the course of self-control and implicit obedience!

It is the highway to honour and distinction, peace of mind, and the approval of God. The most generous spirits are the first to tread it. How would I urge upon parents that none but the Christian virtues are transplanted to the Paradise of God, and that these do not take root here, but under the earliest and most careful culture of gentle discipline, and judicious but unremitted restraint! The seed of future misery to the individual or the community is that which is left uneradicated in the heart of the child.

To what extent dearth which is begun, and civil discord which is rife among us, may be permitted to inflict their sorrow, is known only to Him whose wrath we have kindled. God sends sufferings as warnings, and if those warnings are not taken, greater sufferings may be expected. Well has the government of our country done in calling upon the whole nation to confess their sins, and to pray for grace to repent and lead new lives, for so only may the divine judgments be averted. Then, in the place of "strifes and divisions," might there be peace and brotherly love.—Turn away, for a moment, from the scene around you: still whatever there is unquiet in your own restless heart, and try to realise, in imagination at least, the Psalmist's heavenly vision. "Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity!

It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard: even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his clothing. Like as the dew of Hermon, which fell upon the hill of Sion. For there the Lord promised his blessing; and life for evermore." He compares such love and harmony to the precious perfume poured on the head of Aaron, when anointed to the office of High Priest, flowing down over every part of his person, even to the lowest extremities of his garments; and again, to the dew descending from Heaven, and spreading itself so universally over the land, as to cover at once two mountains so distant from each other. Could such peace be within any circle upon earth, there it would be universal. It would be diffused from the father over the family, from the master over the school, from the sovereign over the people. But in every circle there is more or less of selfishness, self-will, and insubordination, and one unkindred spirit mars the whole. Still, though we may not look for such peace here, let every one bear in mind that they who would fit themselves for the abode of God hereafter, where there is nothing but peace, must first love and practise it upon earth.

Then there is the "misuse of God's gifts, and forgetfulness of his manifold mercies!" "Misuse of his gifts:" time and talents thrown away,

opportunities of doing good passed over—things lightly thought of, but strictly to be accounted for. “Forgetfulness of his manifold mercies;” *spiritual* mercies to us, as a nation, from the first preaching of the Gospel of Salvation, the first founding of a church in Britain:—*temporal* mercies, to go back only a few years; free and triumphant whilst all the other kingdoms of Europe were wasted by the sword: no nation on earth with “statutes and judgments so righteous;” none so powerful and wealthy; rich possessions in every quarter of the globe, and their millions under our dominion. But we have left those millions in spiritual darkness, and in such we are leaving them still. And what we have not done as a nation, we have not done as individuals; that is, we have not done God’s work, as we might and ought to have done, by spreading the knowledge of religion and of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ignorant around us, whether at home or abroad. We have not done so either by a religious education, or by our own religious example. And so we have misused the gifts of God, and been forgetful of his manifold mercies.

Nor have we been mindful, according to our means, of the temporal distresses, and necessities of our brethren. We have not responded, as we ought to have done, to the appeals made to us on

their behalf. We have bread enough and to spare, and they perish with hunger. These things naturally follow from not "loosing the bands of wickedness;" a hard-hearted unconcern about others is the natural consequence of sensual indulgence, and ungodly living. For such sins in part the Lord sent upon the "inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah," famine, pestilence, and the sword.

And we, as a nation, have had some warnings within the memory of many. Though eventually victorious over every enemy, we have, humanly speaking, been very near having the victory against us. Humanly speaking, the Battle of Waterloo would have been lost, and perhaps the destiny of Britain changed, if the Prussian army, which arrived late in the field on that terrible day, had been only twenty minutes later. Though prosperous in commercial greatness and wealth, we have been, even within the last few months, on the point of having our dominion in the East shaken to its very foundation. Though free from pestilence now, it is barely sixteen years ago that the cholera, that terrible scourge of the Almighty, was raging in parts of this kingdom, and every town and village was expecting it there. Even now we have dearth among us, and if it do not grow into famine, it will be another instance of God's mercy towards us: for which may He give us grateful hearts! as well as for

being saved from that, which is worse than famine, but always attendant upon it, the tumults and madness of ungodly men! How ought we to lay to heart the admonition he has given us! "If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins." And what God says to nations, he says to individuals.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem did not repent, though warned and afflicted by famine, as already noticed, and only eleven years afterwards we find the prophet giving utterance to his grief in this sore lamentation: "They are come unto the city to take it: and the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest it."

"Whoso is wise will ponder these things: and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

No. III.

FIRE AT ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUND-
LAND.

Sunday, Nov. 1. 1846.

Extract from the Bishop of Salisbury's Letter to each of his Clergy with the Queen's Letter for a Collection in all Churches and Chapels for the Sufferers by Fire at St. John's Newfoundland.

"It has pleased the Almighty to visit the Colony of Newfoundland with a dreadful calamity, which suddenly swept away three fourths of its late wealthy and prosperous capital, the City of St. John.

"By a fire which broke out in the morning of the 9th of June last, and continued to rage during the whole day, most of the public buildings of the city, and, with one single reception, all its wharfs, storehouses, and mercantile establishments, covering upwards of a mile in extent, have been reduced to ashes. It is estimated that 2000 houses, and property to the amount of from 600,000*l.*, to 1,000,000 sterling, were consumed by the flames, and that 12,000 persons of all conditions and classes were left in a state of absolute destitution, without houses, or clothing, or the means of procuring food. Such provision as circumstances would allow was made for the immediate relief of the sufferers; but more effectual aid than can be supplied from local resources in the present overwhelming distress of the Colony is required to preserve many from perishing by hunger and cold, when the frost, which often continues without intermission from the middle of Autumn till late in the Spring, sets in."

Love is the fruit of Faith, and the proof of Repentance.

When one came running, and knelt down at the feet of Jesus, and asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." The young man had obeyed the law to the letter, but he went away sorrowful, because his riches were greater than his love.

The subject was so important, and of such universal application, that Jesus "called the people unto him with his disciples also," and preached to

them upon it, "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." *Self-denial* is the condition and proof of discipleship. He who is a disciple will deny himself to give to the needy: he who gives to the needy without denying himself, is not a disciple. This is the principle which brings down the rich man to the poor man's level, and then exalts them both. The widow denied herself when she threw into the treasury of God her two mites, because it was "all her living;" but the wealthy offerers did not deny themselves when they cast in their costly gifts, because they gave, but not to any self-sacrifice, "of their abundance." *Self-denial* for Christ's sake alone renders acceptable to God the rich man's offering, and it is the same which sanctifies the schoolboy's gift, and the pence of the poor.

But self-denial comprises much more than this single branch of it; for it is a *daily cross*, to be taken up, and to be borne. It is a cross which none can be excused, and which again brings the rich and the poor together, and the young and the old. It is the discipline of the mind, the affections, the temper, the whole man. To the schoolboy, it is study before play, duty before inclination, sub-

mission and obedience for conscience sake, and the early consideration of others before himself. As he grows up and goes out into the world, it is only the continual adherence to the same high principle, in its confirmed and steady development, the same daily self-control, the same "doing all things as unto the Lord." It is daily self-denial in wishes and inclinations, when incompatible with duty. It is that renunciation of self-love and self-will, which enabled the Apostle to make his appeal, and to say, that, so far as had been consistent with faithfulness, he had pleased all men in all things, and had ever sought their interests in preference to his own. It is not the going out of the way to seek a cross, but the stooping down to lift it up where it lies in the path, and the bearing it without repining. But it is a course little followed. And when the parent, or the preacher, or the kind friend speaks to the young man of his abuse of the gifts of God; time wasted, talents thrown away, opportunities unimproved, bread cast to the dogs, of which others would gladly have picked up the crumbs; and remonstrates with the self-willed and self-indulgent, that he has all his life through been looking to himself and not to others, gratifying all his inclinations at whatever cost to his own true interests, or to the just wishes of those who have been set to guide and to advise him; he considers

himself as unjustly assailed, turns upon his admonisher with a look and tone of reproachful displeasure, and referring him to the bare letter of the moral commandments, exclaims with much self-satisfaction, "All these have I observed from my youth."

I have said so much on this point, because self-denial must be begun early in life, and daily practised in all the branches of it. Without it a man may be amiable in the eyes of the world; for even the young ruler had something which recommended itself to the human affections of Christ; but he cannot be Christ's disciple. Many under the impulse of excited feelings are ready to give to the needy and distressed, but it is only the self-denying who are consistently charitable; and many are charitable with their means, who will not deny themselves in their inclinations, — who will not bear their own peculiar cross.

As soon as God has taught a lesson of Christian duty, he gives an occasion to practise it. And I have been led to this remark by the obvious consideration of the duty of self-denial in its exercise of brotherly love and charity, at this moment standing prominently forward. This is a season of dearth and scarcity, which has brought with it dearness of all the necessaries of life, actual distress to many, and the compulsory practice of economy and frugality

to almost all of us. Yet does all this only impose a still further obligation upon us to be prompt and cheerful in assisting and relieving others. And in addition to the many occasions for this at home, there is a loud call to us from a distant land, which is being replied to by a letter from our gracious Queen.

The city of St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland, has been half consumed by fire. Two thousand houses have been burned down, and "twelve thousand persons of all conditions and classes have been left in absolute destitution, without houses, or clothes, or means of procuring food."

Newfoundland is a British Colony, and one of the poorest we have. It is in North America, and in America every thing is on a gigantic scale. The mountains are among the highest in the world. The rivers are the noblest; some of them ninety miles across. The lakes are rather inland seas of fresh water, a thousand or fifteen hundred miles in circumference. The cold is on the same scale, and is of a severity of which we can form no conception from our own experience. The Rev. Henry Caswall has told me that he has crossed a river there in a boat on Saturday afternoon, and on the Monday following has returned over it *on foot*; a river of a mile in breadth had been so entirely

frozen in six and thirty hours. What then must it be in such a country, and in the winter too, for 12,000 persons to be without houses, or clothing, or the means of procuring food!

As I and my family were sitting together last night—thank God for giving us a house and fire! the bell at the outer door rang, and a stranger sent in his card. It was the Bishop of Newfoundland.* He had just arrived from America, and, having occasion to pass through this town, was so kind as to call upon me. I told him I was going to preach and make a collection in my church the next day for the sufferers in his cold country and poor diocese, and that I wished he could stay and plead the cause himself. He confirmed all I have said of the poverty and destitute condition of his people, and told me that their sorrows and sufferings had been still further increased by a violent

* The Bishop of Newfoundland was once staying in my house for some days, "in the merry month of May," and his bedroom window opening to the East, he was awakened every morning at a very early hour, by the singing of the birds, which he said surpassed, in sweetness and variety, everything of the kind he had ever heard before. He alluded to the circumstance last night, and observed that he had often thought of it in Newfoundland, where the birds are almost all silent. Is it a small thing to have "the music of the groves," and "to see all nature gay?"

hurricane which had destroyed numbers of houses, and occasioned many deaths. So I have told all this to my people to-day, and have expressed a hope that the good Bishop would be able to report on his return to Newfoundland, that a little town through which he had passed when in England, in the centre of Salisbury Plain, had felt for them in their distresses, and had liberally and cheerfully contributed to relieve them.—The appeal has not been made in vain.

Such reflections on what others suffer should lift up our hearts in gratitude for our happier lot. Whatever our own privations may be, we have at least houses to shelter us, fire to warm us, and food to keep us from starving. To think upon these blessings, and then to reflect that in Newfoundland, a British Colony, are *twelve thousand* persons of all conditions and classes in a state of absolute destitution, without houses, without clothing, without the means of procuring food, but by appealing to the charity of others! May God quicken at once our thankfulness and our charity! He alone knows what sufferings may be in store for ourselves; let us seek to propitiate his favour by “showing compassion and mercy each man to his neighbour, and bearing the burdens one of another,” and so fulfilling the law of Christ. I often think of, and repeat to

myself, that old saying which we learned in our infant days ;—

“ The mercy you to others show,
That mercy shall be shown to you.”

It is but another version of what Scripture teaches,
“ Blessed is he that considereth the poor and
needy ; the Lord shall deliver him in the time of
trouble.”

No. IV.

QUEEN'S LETTER FOR THE IRISH
AND SCOTCH.

First Sunday in Lent, Feb. 21. 1847.

LAST Wednesday was the first day of Lent, on which occasion I always read the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, as the first lesson for the service of the day; and I never read it without feeling that, if there were no other testimony to the truth and inspiration of the Bible, this alone would be sufficient. The History of the Jewish nation there predicted, compared with their subsequent history, as recorded by both sacred and profane writers, gives the clearest evidence that such a declaration of what should come to pass, so defined, so explicit, so detailed, and which has been fulfilling, and is at this moment being fulfilled, throughout a period already elapsed of three thousand two hundred and ninety-eight years, could have been given beforehand only by Him, to whom the past, the present, and the future are but one and the same.

I would that every educated person could be persuaded, for his soul's sake, to spare some little time daily from the business of his worldly profession, and the reading of newspapers and other like publications, to the reading of the Bible, and such histories of the world as bear the most undoubted evidence to the fulfilment of prophecy. I

declare that I scarcely know any weapon in the hand of our spiritual enemy more fatal to men's souls, more powerful to call us off from the knowledge of truth and the way of salvation, than a daily newspaper and a library of novels. I am not now speaking of the falsehoods, or the inflammatory matter and language with which newspapers too often abound, setting men's minds—nay, the whole world, on fire. I am simply meaning here, the power which they so extensively and unhappily exercise, to call off the mind from seeking after and attaining to the knowledge of those solemn and vital truths of God's Holy Word, on which their everlasting happiness depends. I once took in a daily paper at a very exciting period, the passing of the Reform Bill. It cost me four hours a day to read it: it interested the feelings, it roused the passions, it absorbed, it weakened, it wasted the powers of the mind. I was fit for nothing afterwards which required thought and attention and application. Much the same effects are produced by works of fiction: they draw us off from useful knowledge, and unfit us for acquiring it.

In reference to the mischievous effects of such reading in early life, Dr. Arnold has the following observation:—"Childishness in boys, even of good abilities, seems to me to be a growing fault, and I do not know to what to ascribe it, except to the

great number of exciting books of amusement, like *Pickwick* and *Nickleby*, *Bentley's Magazine*, &c. These completely satisfy all the intellectual appetite of a boy, which is rarely very voracious, and leave him totally palled, not only for his regular work, which I could well excuse in comparison, but for good literature of all sorts, even for history and for poetry."

Nor is this digression foreign to our present subject. I was saying that the predictions of that one chapter, *Deuteronomy 28th*, proved, as they are, to have been fulfilled to the very letter, in the past and present history of the Jewish nation, are of themselves amply sufficient to convince us that the Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God. But to be so convinced, we must be acquainted, not only with the Scriptures which contain the predictions, but with the histories which bear evidence to their fulfilment. And of both of these people are generally ignorant, through applying their time and their thoughts to reading of a far different kind. To such persons prophecy has been given in vain. And where men are wilfully ignorant of Scriptural truth, they can have no saving faith. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

God had promised the outpouring of every temporal blessing on the Jewish nation, so long

as they should keep his commandments, and their history shows that this was fulfilled. At the same time he had declared what curses should be inflicted on their disobedience, and to these also their history bears the fullest testimony. The Lord *did* bring upon them diseases of every kind and degree. He did bring upon them pestilence, and famine, and the sword. He did "bring a nation against them from far, swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue they did not understand: a nation of fierce countenance, which regarded not the person of the old, nor showed favour to the young." True even to the letter of the allusion, the Romans, with the standard of a flying eagle at the head of each legion, "besieged Jerusalem in all her gates;" and the horrors of that memorable siege were never equalled upon earth. Their own historian, the celebrated Josephus, gives us the unhappy detail. True again to the letter of the prediction, they *did* "eat the fruit of their own body." One Lady of the highest rank, such a one as God had before described, "tender and delicate, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness;" "her eye *was* evil towards her young one that came out from between her feet;" for, when the dire deed was discovered, she had already devoured a portion of her infant child, "for want

of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies distressed them in their gates." And to this day the Jewish nation is "an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word among all nations whither the Lord has led them."

And shall it fare better with us? No nation upon earth was ever at once so temporally and spiritually blessed as we have been: none surely more estranged from God, more walking in the ways of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes.

"Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee." Unthankfulness for God's bounties was the crowning act of Israel's sins, and so, I fear, it is of ours. We have not been thankful, as we ought to have been, for the light of Divine truth which has been vouchsafed us, nor for the privileges of a Christian Church, the ordinances of religion, and the means of grace. We have not been thankful for the free government under which we live, the equitable laws by which we are ruled, or any of those ecclesiastical or civil blessings which we possess. Nor have we individually been more thankful for the necessities

and comforts of domestic life. We do not prize health, until we have lost it; nor friends, until they have been taken from us; nor any other of God's bounties, until they have been withdrawn.

Therefore may we well fear the denunciation of God's wrath, that, because we have not served him thankfully "for the abundance of all things," we "shall serve our enemies in want of all things," and have their iron yoke upon our necks. Scoffers may laugh, and say, "How shall this be, seeing we are a great and flourishing people?" But God never wants means to work his will. His usual weapons for bringing down the high looks of the proud, and punishing the nations of the earth, are famine, pestilence, and the sword. The sword we have had, and pestilence we have had — sufficient at the least to warn us; and famine is begun.

There is an old Latin proverb: "It is time to look to our own house, when our neighbour's is on fire." Our brethren of Ireland and of Scotland, who have fought with us, and bled with us, and shared with us all the dangers and the triumphs of the field, are at this moment in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things. And when our neighbour's house is on fire, we not only try to save our own, but to help him; and if we did not, the very mob would cry shame upon us. And would it not be a shame to see our brethren starving, and

not give them food? To see the wasted hand of a fellow-creature extended towards us, and hunger and death written in every wrinkle of his wan and haggard features, and to hear the hollow tones of famine's voice, and answer to its appeal, "No, I have nothing to give;" and then to go to our own meals, and say grace, and pretend to thank God for his bounties to us, when we have just left the starving to starve? Would not the poorest of the poor cry out, "Shame, shame!" and might we not justly fear that God would turn our food into poison, and cause our dainties to choke us? People may say that the Irish are lazy. At all events the Scotch are not so. People may say this or that: it may be true, or it may not be true; but this at least is true, they are starving; they are cold, and naked, and in want of all things, and dying by hundreds and by thousands, and I can hear nothing else. Whilst the wailings of death, lingering, cruel, dreadful death, death by hunger, are rising and swelling around me, and growing more and more piteous, and filling a wider and widening circle, and piercing the air and piercing the soul, I can hear nothing else; my ears will admit no cold, chilling, selfish charges about laziness, or unthankfulness, or any other thing which is to steel the heart, and close the hand, and leave the wretched to their wretchedness. I can hear nothing but the cries of famished thousands

calling upon me by all that is human, by all that is sacred, by the mercy I would have shown to me in my greatest need, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, to save the parent and his child, and the mother and her infant, and the household assembled round their foodless board, and to soothe the agonies of bodily suffering, and the anguish of mental and mutual misery.—And famine has bred fever, and that is aiding the work of death ; and out of less than 800 in the workhouse of Lurgan, 95 died last week.

What a subject is all this for personal application ! May we lay it to heart, and, in particular, may we all be more thankful than we have hitherto been for God's numberless mercies !

May the rich especially "serve him with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things !" May they reflect that riches will avail them nothing, when food is not to be had ! People cannot eat gold and silver. And rank will only aggravate their sorrows, when popular tumults arise, and one common calamity shall have brought all down to one common level.

May the poor be thankful for the *poor-law*, that merciful provision by which every person, not having food, may claim it as his right, and also clothing, and warmth, and house-room ! There is no such law in Ireland. At this very time and in

this very parish, when the poor generally, hard-working industrious men, have not a potato for themselves or their families, the poor in the Union house are eating them at fifteen shillings a sack. Oh ! it grieves one to see how little thankfulness there is for so merciful a law !

And may we all have grace to turn to God with true repentance, and so avert his judgments ; seeking to conciliate his present favour by liberally and cheerfully relieving his children ; and “doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by Him !”

No. V.

NATIONAL FAST PROCLAIMED.

Sunday, March 21. 1847.

" By Her Majesty's Special Command," Proclamation has been made of —

" A Form of Prayer to be used in all churches and chapels on Wednesday, the 24th day of March, 1847, for a General Fast and Humiliation before Almighty God, in order to obtain pardon of our sins, so that we may, in the most devout and solemn manner, send up our prayers and supplications to the Divine Majesty, for the removal of those heavy judgments which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved, and with which Almighty God is pleased to visit the iniquities of this land by a grievous Scarcity and Dearth of divers articles of sustenance and necessities of life."

“BECAUSE they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel, therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them : and the hills did tremble, and their carcases were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.” An answer of peace has not yet been vouchsafed to the prayers of this nation. The anger of the God of mercy is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. It has been stated in Parliament that 5000 adults and 10,000 children have already died in Ireland of starvation ; and that without timely and effectual assistance, one-fourth of the population of the country will be dead before the next harvest. Letters have appeared in the public journals from different clergymen, saying, that their parishioners are dying in such numbers, that they cannot be buried in separate graves, but are obliged to be put into large pits together, as if it were on the field of battle.

A National Fast has been proclaimed, on account of the dearth and scarcity now affecting this king-

dom, amounting in some parts of it to absolute famine, with all its horrors of disease, pestilence, and death, and spreading wider and wider, and threatening in no long time to involve ourselves in these most terrible calamities.

On Wednesday next the whole nation is to prostrate itself in deep humiliation before God, confessing that their sins have deserved, what their sins have brought down upon them, national punishment, the outpouring of the wrath of the Almighty on the guilty deeds of this people, nationally and individually. Of what importance, therefore, is it, nationally and individually, that this fast be kept with the most unfeigned repentance, lest we bring down a curse upon us instead of a blessing! Duly observed, this prostration of the heart, as well as of the outward man before the Lord, may help to avert his anger.

I am old enough to remember some of the fasts during the late war, appointed to conciliate God's mercy to us when the armies of France were desolating Europe, and making and unmaking kings at their pleasure. God did show us wonderful mercy at that time: He protected us from the miseries which others endured: He gave victory to our arms: He caused us to be deliverers of mankind: He beat down all enemies under our feet.

With what deep humiliation was the National

Fast observed, outwardly at least, when we prayed God to avert from us that most terrible scourge of his, *the cholera* ! One of the journals of the day has just made allusion to this. " We dare not to inquire what may be the dealing of the All-wise with us on the present occasion ; but we should be sinfully ungrateful to forget what followed the similar act of national humiliation upon occasion of the Cholera pestilence. England humbled herself, and ' the plague was stayed ' *from the very day of the public fast*, a day made gloriously memorable in the religious history of this country, by more than half a million of persons having partaken of the holy sacrament in the London churches alone. The disease rapidly declined in this country, while it continued its ravages over nearly the whole of the rest of Europe. For more than 1700 years, such acts of national humiliation, under great and unusual afflictions, have been the usage of the Christian church ; and it would be difficult to point out an instance in which they have not been followed by a manifest abatement of the Divine anger." How important, then, that this approaching fast should be most devoutly, religiously, and unfeignedly observed !

But in respect to *individual* feelings, there will obviously be the danger of this difference between the preceding fasts within our memory, and the

one appointed for Wednesday next. In the time of war, thousands were mourners for the slain, many more thousands were trembling for the lives of husbands, sons, brothers, and friends. It was seen what conquered kingdoms were suffering. Our own country had been on the point of being invaded, the horrors of warfare were experienced very generally in a variety of ways, and men *felt* that they had a *personal interest* in observing the appointed fasts in the spirit of humility and devotion. On occasion of *the cholera*, no one felt secure that he might not at any moment become the victim of that most dreadful malady, and have remaining to him only a few hours of agonizing torture between health and the grave. Therefore, were these fasts observed in some manner as fasts ought to be.

But on the present occasion, although thousands of our countrymen have already died of actual starvation; still we have lost no personal friends, nor are we just now under apprehension for any, and the existing calamity has as yet reached us only in high prices and very painful scarcity. We feel in no peril for our own lives, or those of any who are dear to us. And the great fear is, that we shall be greatly wanting in the spirit and reality of our humiliation; that we shall observe the day as unto men, and not unto God; and that in the place of sincerity, it will be hypocrisy and pre-

tence. I imply not that it *will* be so, but only that it *may* be so, with very many individuals; and the nation is made up of individuals; and individual sins bring national punishment. How important, therefore, is it, again, that the approaching fast should be individually observed in the most humble and penitent spirit!

And we might well bring home the importance of this fast to ourselves by other considerations. As national visitations come not altogether for one specific class of crimes, but for the general and complicated sinfulness of the great bulk of the community; so is that sinfulness by no means generally visited by that specific infliction. That infliction is sent far more as a *warning*, than a *chastisement*. Its chief purpose is, to call to our remembrance our individual sins, and to admonish us that the end of all sin is everlasting death. Many terrible examples are made, many thousands fall victims to this particular infliction, that the warning may be more general and impressive; but the great majority of deaths occurring, even during the most fatal period of the national visitation, have no connexion with it. They arise from age and accidents and divers diseases; such causes, in short, as bring us all down to the grave sooner or later. So that if we could be quite sure that the national visitation would not visit ourselves, we

ought not the less to take to ourselves the warning. In the case of the cholera, of which so many thousands died, not one among us, nor one dear to us probably, was a sufferer ; and yet how many, who were then fearing nothing so much as that disease, have since died by other deaths ! How many of us have since mourned over the departed ; but they have not been taken away by that which was the object of our apprehensions. Therefore, ought we all to bring home this national visitation to our own hearts, as a subject in which we have the greatest personal and individual concern ; as a warning to us of the anger of God against our own sins ; as a merciful call to us to cast them from us, and to turn to him in true repentance. And under this solemn impression does it become us to observe the approaching fast in deep self-conviction and the sincerest resolutions of amendment of life.

May we have grace so to repent !

And as we would *have* mercy, so let us *show* mercy. If we have been injured by any, let us forgive, as we hope to be forgiven. He who is not in charity with his brother, is at enmity with his God. Let us not presume to offer a gift to the one, whilst we are at ill-will with the other. Nor let ours be a hollow reconciliation, like base coin, to pass current only for a few days : let it be a forgiveness from the heart, for God is not mocked. Let not

pride stand in the way, that accursed passion which cast down angels from heaven to hell. He stands highest in the estimation of God, and of wise and good men, who is the readiest to relent, and the first to forgive. Nor can we conceive a circumstance more certain to bring down upon any man the sore displeasure of the Lord, than outwardly to keep the approaching fast, whilst he inwardly keeps his resentment.

And let our alms go up with our prayers. Out of God's bounties to us, let us make to him a suitable return by offering some gift to his service. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? . . . If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not!"

Fulfilling these our bounden duties, we may

humbly hope by God's grace spiritually to keep the fast and the feast together, "not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Thus may we receive together the Holy Communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, sealing at his altar the covenant of love, peace, and unity among ourselves, and praying him to renew and to confirm his covenant with us of pardon, and grace, and sanctification, and redemption.

No. VI.

NATIONAL
FAST AND HUMILIATION.

Wednesday, March 24. 1847..

A Prayer from the Service on the Fast-Day.

“ Almighty God and Heavenly Father, who art terrible in thy judgments upon impenitent sinners, and abundant in mercy to all that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Thee ; we, thy afflicted people, desire to humble ourselves before thee, in behalf of ourselves and of our brethren, who, in many parts of this United Kingdom, are suffering extreme famine and sickness. We confess with shame and contrition, that, in the pride and hardness of our hearts, we have shown ourselves unthankful for thy mercies, and have followed our own imaginations instead of thy holy laws. We humbly desire thy fatherly goodness to grant us such a measure of thy grace, that worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, we may obtain comfort from thee, and deliverance from this grievous calamity. Awaken in us, we beseech thee, a deep sense of our many transgressions, and a godly sorrow for our sins, so sincere and lasting as may move thee to withdraw thy displeasure, that we be not utterly consumed by the means of thy heavy hand ; and that we may bring forth the fruits of repentance through the whole course of our lives. And give us that right apprehension of our duty in all things, that if it be thy will we should suffer, we may submit ourselves with entire resignation and patience ; and that if it be thy good pleasure to spare us, we may show mercy, so far as we may be able, to all men, and more especially to those who are now brought down to the ground by hunger and sickness, and who have none to help them. Grant this, for the sake of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

WE have not had a national fast before for sixteen years. The last was on account of the cholera. Since then we have sinned with a high hand. The very removal of that terrible scourge, with our unthankfulness for the mercy, has greatly increased our guilt; for who has in consequence lived more to God since? A like return for the continued blessings of peace and national prosperity has aggravated the reckoning against us. This is the very language of the prayers we have offered up to-day. We have "confessed with shame and contrition, that, in the pride and hardness of our hearts, we have shown ourselves unthankful for God's mercies, and have followed our own imaginations instead of his holy laws." For these our sins, God's judgments have fallen upon us. Famine is devouring its thousands. Pestilence has begun to rage. The cholera is again steadily advancing towards us. We are ourselves reaping the first fruits of the wrath of the Almighty, in scarcity and high prices. And seeing in all this the hand and the justice of God, we have prayed for "grace, that, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, we may obtain comfort from him, and deliverance from

this grievous calamity:" and that he would "awaken in us a deep sense of our many transgressions, and a godly sorrow for our sins, so sincere and lasting as may move him to withdraw his displeasure, that we be not utterly consumed by the means of his heavy hand; and that we may bring forth the fruits of repentance through the whole course of our lives."

May we have the honesty and the Christian courage this day to look our sins in the face, and grace to bemoan them with deep contrition, as the first step towards repentance and making our peace with God!

As a nation, we have cast off that constant reference to the will and superintending Providence of God, which ought to distinguish a Christian people. *Religious principle* is no longer the foundation on which the counsels of this kingdom are laid, and its measures built up; *expediency* has taken its place; and popular clamour dictates and directs the principal acts of the legislature. Men stand not firm in the Lord, and so every thing has become unstable and unsettled. A vast proportion of the property of the Church, devised by our forefathers for pious purposes in the service of God, has been profanely given to laymen; and the Church cannot do the work assigned her, of spreading the knowledge, and the principles, and the practical carrying out of the

doctrines and the precepts of the Gospel. The security now for any man's property is not the *right to possess* but the *power to keep*. God himself has been robbed of his portion. And the nation has acquiesced in the sacrilege, and been ready to share in the plunder.* How awfully applicable to us appears to be the reproach of God to Israel, by his prophet Malachi! "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."

And the people of the land are left without

* On the 4th of August, 1789, it was proposed in the National Assembly of France, "that the redemption of tithes should be allowed, and that they should be commuted into a payment in money." On the 7th of the same month, "the popular leaders maintained that it was not the power of redeeming, but the *abolition* of tithes, which had been voted; and that all that the clergy had a right to was a decent provision for their members." On the 13th of the same month, the assembly voted "the suppression of tithes, under the condition that the State should fitly provide for religion and its ministers,—a condition which was then understood to be, what it immediately afterwards became, perfectly illusory." "When men vote away the property of others, they can expect no mercy for their own; when the foundations of society are torn up, the first to be sacrificed are the most defenceless of its members." Who does not know the rest?—Alison's French Revol. vol. I. pp. 166. 169, 170.

houses of God to worship in ; and where houses of God are, they are suffered to fall into decay.

And the ministrations of the Church are wholly inadequate to her children's wants, and they are allowed to grow up under her own eye in utter ignorance of divine truth ; heathens in a Christian land. And the nation look on again with indifference, and are intent only on personal gratification and self-aggrandisement. No wonder, then, that the heathen abroad are neglected, and left in the darkness and shadow of death ; and that all the little glimmering of gospel light which is reflected on them from us, who are sitting in the full splendour of it, is the feeble work of societies and individuals, instead of the combined and powerful energies of the nation and its government.

Such things could never be, were the bulk of the community anything more than nominally Christian, and therefore does the nation at large fully participate in the guilt of them. "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee."

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient ; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of

envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Awful passage! have we not in it the very description of the doings we see around us, whether in the town or the country, in this village or in that? Well may we fast, and humble ourselves, "and cry mightily unto God!"

And what follows in necessary and regular gradation? We have it in the words of another Apostle: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye envy *, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it on your lusts." We may be quite sure that where the love and fear of God are not, the genuine love of man cannot be. The sensual or the selfish passions will drive it away, and offended pride, or awakened anger, or

* Marginal Readings.

some mortified feeling will soon give the proof of this. And "where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work:—public faction and private feuds, jealousies and heart-burnings among neighbours, variance between brethren, and "a man's foes, they of his own household."

Then comes the crowning consequence of all. "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." The wrath of God is indeed wonderful in its forbearance. Cloud after cloud gathers, and approaches, and passes over. But if men brave these tokens, and mock at these warnings, and wantonly expose themselves to the threatened vengeance, the darkest and the blackest cloud of all will some day burst over their heads, and the justice of God will vindicate his violated laws. The Lord sent the sword against us for our sins, and we humbled ourselves, and he took it away. And then we disregarded his mercy, and sinned again, and he sent pestilence to warn us, and again we humbled ourselves, and he took it away. And now we have sinned more than ever; more generally, more daringly, more flagitiously, and famine has begun its work, and is raging in our sister kingdoms of Ireland and

Scotland. I could fill page after page with the heart-rending details of the miseries of cold and nakedness, and hunger, and the want of all things, now being endured by the wretched sufferers. It may all be summed up in the words of a letter which I received yesterday :—"It is indeed a time for national and individual humiliation and prayer. The private accounts we receive from relations in Ireland are most afflicting. A complete prostration of all energy appears to have come over the wretched population, who neither bury their dead, nor prepare for the living by tilling the ground. Pestilence will, I fear, spread, when warmer weather comes, from the very imperfect manner in which, for months past, the victims of famine have been consigned to their graves. May God, in his mercy, grant us a prosperous harvest, or the present is but the beginning of misery too painful to contemplate!" And what should be the practical result of all this ?

First ; a full and unfeigned confession of our sins, such as Daniel made for himself and his people. "O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments ; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judg-

ments. . . O Lord, hear ; O Lord, forgive ; O Lord, hearken and do ; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God : for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." Then may we have grace to put away from us all carelessness and indifference to the things of God, serve him with the first affections of the heart, and offer to him of the best which we have ! May we show something of Daniel's spirit, when, amid the outpouring of his soul, he thought of the ruined sanctuary of the Lord in Jerusalem, and prayed that his face might shine upon it, that so it might again rear its hallowed walls, and again become his peculiar habitation upon earth, a house meet for his dwelling !

Secondly ; may we, as an indispensable step, be in charity with all men ! May we remember no unkindly word or act spoken or done against us, excepting only to forgive it from the heart ! And then how much happier shall we be ! It will be a heavy weight taken off from our minds, and our tempers, and our consciences ; for he who is not at peace with a fellow creature can never be at peace with God ; and then how can he be at peace with himself ? May we avoid all bitterness of speech, especially on the subject of religion ! How many of those unhappy apostasies from our Church, whether from the eastern or western door of it, might be prevented, were only half that breath sent up to

heaven in prayer for unity and godly love, which is now poured out in angry invective against those whom we believe to be in error! "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

Above all, may we look each man into his own heart, and search out our own besetting sins, and strive and pray against them, until we are freed from their chains! And then this one solemn day will not stand alone and single in our recollection, but there will be many others like it to the end of our lives. Many of us, I hope, will hereafter look back upon this, as one of the most happily marked days in the whole of their existence. I shall do so to the end of mine. True we have met together on a mournful occasion; but then it has been a holy occasion; and how can it be holy, and not also be happy? There has been an unanimity among us, such as has not been for many a day. And O! the blessing of living together in unity! may God cement and perpetuate this unity! may it flow from love and faith, and pervade all our intercourse with one another! O! this is one of the blessed effects of affliction; it softens the heart, it kindles there a holy glow; it awakens our dormant sympathies towards one another; it purifies as the

furnace does the ore, it separates the dross, and leaves the sterling gold behind. It was a pleasing sight this morning to see 158 communicants assembled around the Lord's Table; and the alms presented at the offertory to be given to our poor starving brethren in Ireland and Scotland amounted to 10*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*, of which 13*s.* 3*d.* were in halfpence. I believe that many of our people know something at least of our Divine Master's meaning when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

It may be the will of God that we should suffer, as our brethren are doing; or it may please him in his mercy to turn away his kindled wrath, and to bless us with a bountiful harvest, and to restore plenty among us, and to save the lives of those yet surviving in poor afflicted Ireland. May he give us grace to repent, and to believe, and to do works meet for repentance, and then we shall at the most sorrow but "as it were for a little moment," and after that "our joy shall be full!" And in the mean time, whether we live, we shall live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we shall die unto the Lord; so that, living or dying, we shall be his, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

No. VII.

**THANKSGIVING
FOR AN ABUNDANT HARVEST**

Sunday, Oct. 17. 1847.

*From the Form of Thanksgiving to Almighty God for
THE LATE ABUNDANT HARVEST.*

" O Lord, who for our iniquities hast smitten us with the rod of correction, and in compassion for our manifold infirmities hast withdrawn thy scourge from us, we humbly acknowledge thy Fatherly goodness in blessing the fruits of our fields, and redeeming our souls from death. In the hour of distress and affliction, when our heart fainted within us through fear of the evils to come, we cried unto thee ; and thou, O Lord, in thy mercy hast changed our dearth into plenty, and our apprehensions and sorrows into thankfulness and joy. To thy loving-kindness alone we ascribe our preservation from the dreadful calamities which must have fallen upon us from the continuance of famine in the land. Vouchsafe, O Lord, we beseech thee, to accept our humble and hearty thanksgivings, and so enlighten our understandings, and sanctify our affections by thy good Spirit, that being warned by thy chastisements of the danger of sin, and knowing that in thy favour is life, we may dread thy displeasure above all things, and evermore strive to please thee by such use of thy bounties as may tend to thy honour and glory, and to the temporal and eternal good of mankind. Give us grace that we may learn from thy judgments our entire dependence on thee for the supply of our daily bread, and that being fully persuaded that whatever blessing we receive at thy hand is designed for our trial as well as for our comfort, we may impart a share of our bounty, in dutiful accordance with thy holy will, to the afflicted and indigent, the widow, the orphan, and the aged, and thus obtain for ourselves that mercy which thou, in thy word hast promised to the merciful ; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

LET the thoughts revert to the month of March last, to the state of things then existing, to the future evils apprehended. Famine was slaying its thousands, and pestilence its ten thousands, in Ireland and Scotland. Scarcity and high prices were giving us a foretaste of what our own case might be. Public journals and private letters teemed with such expressions as these: "It is, indeed, a time for national and individual humiliation and prayer. May God, in his mercy, grant us a prosperous harvest, or the present is but the beginning of misery too painful to contemplate!" The nation was terrified and humbled. A national Fast-day was appointed. It was ushered in by various useful publications to prepare men's minds for its due observance. Forms of prayer for the day could not be issued fast enough from the press. The churches were thronged. Publicans closed their houses. The streets were silent and empty. One marvelled what had become of our population. They were at home. Never was a day, seemingly, so observed within the memory of man.

He who sitteth on high saw and heard. The

decree went forth that it should be as we desired. The elements and the seasons wrought for us in their courses. Silently, secretly, mightily the work went on. An abundant harvest has been the merciful reply. The potato disease has almost disappeared; or, where there has been infection, the sound crop has doubled its customary yield. We have reasonable prices, and bread to the full. Let us not forget the anguish, for joy that we are delivered out of it.

He who sitteth on high is still observant of our doings. This is the day appointed by Government for our thanksgiving. What! could we not spare a special day to thank God for special blessings, miseries averted, mercies bestowed? Is there nothing resembling "the scant measure," and "the wicked balances," and "the bag of deceitful weights," in thus repaying God with that which costs us nothing, and serving him with that which is peculiarly his own? There are not wanting those who regard it as an act of national impiety and ingratitude.

On the 24th of March last, we made a covenant before the Lord, as Josiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did, supplicating his mercy, and promising to serve him truly. Mercy God has shown; and may we have grace to acquit ourselves of our obligations in the covenant, and "to walk after the

Lord," that we bring not down another judgment on our country !

"Ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto his name : bring presents, and come into his courts." This was David's practical piety. He had experienced great temporal blessings to himself and his kingdom, and he calls upon his people to give thanks unto the Lord. It is a principle we should ever bear about with us, that our prayers and our alms should go up together, and that when we offer praise we should offer gifts. This spirit breathes through the prayers of the special service for the day. A Christian nation, at the call of its Sovereign, is returning thanks for an abundant harvest; the very blessing we have so long been supplicating at the hands of God ; and the Queen has commanded that contributions shall be made in all churches and chapels, for the relief of the victims of famine and disease in Ireland and Scotland. This disposition of our alms has occasioned great and general offence, much murmuring, and a self-willed determination to give to some other purpose than that to which we are directed. This is to act altogether on an erroneous principle.

When we present a thank-offering, as on this occasion, we should consider ourselves as making an oblation to God ; beseeching him mercifully to accept our gift, and to dispense it to others as

seemeth good unto himself. With the distribution of the alms we have no concern, our part being performed when we have made the offering. Unhappily we are apt to leave God out of our thoughts in our charities; and this is one reason why they are so sparingly given, and so scantily blessed. To ourselves they are wholly without a blessing; because they are not given from faith and love, the only principle on which any offering can be acceptable to God. This is plainly the teaching of Scripture, as in the Epistle selected for the day: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." If this principle had been duly considered and acted upon, we should not have heard so much repining and discontent about our contributions being given to the Irish and Scotch. We should simply have considered that we were bringing presents into the courts of the Lord's house, *to be given to him*. We should have regarded the Sovereign he has set over us as acting and speaking by his authority, and should have submitted our will to hers obediently and readily. We should have said: "My offering is to God, and over its disposal I have no control." Giving thus in faith and love, we might humbly hope for a blessing, both on our gift and ourselves. God's favourable acceptance can make the purpose prosper which we may consider

the worst ; and that which we may consider the very best cannot prosper without it. As Bishop Horne observes, " His blessing can multiply a mite into a talent, but his curse will shrink a talent to a mite."

And on this principle it appears to me, that any person holding back a part of what he had intended to give on this occasion, as a thank-offering for God's mercy, because he finds fault with the purpose to which his Sovereign thinks good to apply it, is taking away from God a portion of what he ought to have considered as already consecrated to his service. Let him not deceive himself by the idea that he is only reserving that portion for another and a better purpose ; he is taking it away from that purpose for which God had designed it ; and no plea can justify this. Let him fear lest, so acting, neither portion should receive a blessing. Let him, on the contrary, give *now*, and give *then* too ; and so, giving in faith and obedience as God has pointed out to him the way, he shall have a double privilege, and a double blessing, instead of one.

" O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : let the whole earth stand in awe of him." Such is the Psalmist's admonition in continuation of what he had before said : " Bring presents, and come into his courts."

And what an awful crisis is the present to our-

selves and to our country! We all felt it to be a serious time, when we fasted and prayed, and were full of anxious forebodings, on the 24th of March last. But this appears to me to be a far more serious and anxious time: because we are so little moved by it; because we have received so merciful and bountiful an answer to our prayers, and are so cold, so careless, and so thankless, in return; because to us may be applied, with too true an application, the reproach which belonged to Israel: "When he slew them, they sought him, and turned them early, and inquired after God. And they remembered that God was their strength, and that the high God was their redeemer. Nevertheless they did but flatter him with their mouth, and dissemble with him in their tongue. For their heart was not whole with him; neither continued they stedfast in his covenant."

It is an awful crisis; because, in the very presents which we are bringing into the courts of the Lord's house, so many, we fear, are under the influence of a faithless heart and a factious spirit, not considering that "to obey is better than sacrifice," and that "stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

It is an awful crisis; because God has of late years sent many judgments upon us, which have not been regarded; and a judgment unimproved

is a mercy cast away. We thought that pestilence and famine were mere chronicled tales of olden time, which could never visit this country again; we thought that our more cleanly habits, more spacious streets, better-ventilated houses, and other precautionary measures, would secure us from wide-spreading and deadly infection; and God sent us the *cholera* to punish our presumption, and to warn us. We thought that an improved system of agriculture at home, our numerous internal resources, and a free and prosperous intercourse with the world at large, would insure us against the most remote apprehensions of famine; and God has just made famine approach so near us, as to show us the sin and the folly of reckoning without him.

It is an awful crisis; because the cholera is again advancing steadily towards us from the East, as though it were but awaiting the result of God's present trial of us. And when it shall come once more among us, and we again shall fast and pray and deprecate God's wrath, he may not again remove it from us as he did sixteen years ago: and he may not confine its ravages, as he mostly did then, to the crowded inhabitants of cities and towns, and to the lowest dregs of our uneducated, uncared for, and most unhappy population; but he may send it down to our rural villages, where the

advantages are greater and the sin as rampant; and he may strike down some of the highest and the noblest of the land; and he may spread the havoc promiscuously among all classes, and cause it to be an indweller within our borders.

Finally, this is an awful crisis to us all; because, as the consummation of these things, there is a future account to be given, and a future recompense to be received: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It was the prospect of this forthcoming day, which so overpowered every other consideration in the mind of the Psalmist, that it even suspended the joyous notes of thanksgiving and praise, and changed them into the solemn measure of warning and admonition: "Let the whole earth stand in awe of him. . . . For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth."

THE END.

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